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SUBJECT: RUSSIA HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAM – DRAFT PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Ladies/Gentlemen:

THIS IS NOT A REQUEST FOR APPLICATION. USAID/Russia is preparing for issuance of an Annual Program Statement (APS) for its Human Rights Program in Russia. We are soliciting comments from interested parties, in order to further refine this draft Program Description (PD). Your comments on the attached draft will be appreciated and considered as we finalize the solicitation for applications. The Human Rights Program will develop and implement programs designed to:

1. Enhance provision of legal assistance in cases of alleged human rights abuses and improve enforcement in the courts.
2. Increase influence over public policy by Russian human rights NGOs.
3. Improve understanding of and demand for the protection of human rights and perception of Russian human rights NGOs.

Under the direct guidance of the USAID/Russia Mission through the Program Office, the implementer shall provide Public Education activities that increase awareness of the areas of reform supported by the strategic objectives of the USAID/Russia Mission, including, Democracy and Governance, Rule of Law, and Humanitarian Response/Social Transition. No information on Pricing, Competition, Instructions to Applicants or Evaluation Criteria is available at this time. Please refrain from submitting questions or requests for clarifications in regards to these items, as responses will not be provided. However, comments and supported suggestions will be considered and appreciated. The primary goal is to solicit comments/suggestions on contents of the PD.

Comments will be accepted until December 19, 2001. All comments shall be addressed to Alexander Borzov, Senior Acquisition Specialist, American Embassy Moscow, USAID/Russia, 19/23 Novinski Blvd, Moscow 121099, Russia, or at fax No. (7-095) 960-2140 or email aborzov@usaid.gov or Gary Juste, Agreement Officer, USAID/Russia, email gjuste@usaid.gov

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

Gary Juste
Agreement Officer

Background

The concept of human rights is inherently flexible and subject to interpretation. For the purposes of this paper, human rights include primarily civil and political liberties rather than economic, social and cultural rights. USAID already supports organizations that are working to create the political will and support for improved protection of human rights.

Development Challenge

USAID's human rights program will improve the protection of human rights in Russia, increase Russians' awareness of their human rights and demand for protection of those rights, and improve Russians' perception of the non-governmental organizations that attempt to protect human rights. The program also will improve the capacity of Russians and Russian organizations to positively affect public policy and hold government accountable for the protection of human rights. The numbers of individuals and organizations assisted will be small relative to the need, but the assistance will be targeted and catalytic in driving broader changes that will affect the lives of millions.

Outcomes to be Achieved

4. Enhanced provision of legal assistance in cases of alleged human rights abuses and improved enforcement in the courts.
2. Increased influence over public policy by Russian human rights NGOs.
3. Improved understanding of and demand for the protection of human rights and perception of Russian human rights NGOs.

Illustrative Interventions

1. Enhanced provision of legal assistance in cases of alleged human rights abuses and improved enforcement in the courts.
 - a) Assistance to specialized human rights legal clinics. This could include outreach at the local level and technical training, advocacy programs, and policy analysis by legal clinics. It could also include training for governmental, quasi-governmental, and non-governmental organizations that investigate and adjudicate cases involving the abuse of human rights.
 - b) Training for non-legal staff of human rights organizations.¹
2. Increased dialogue between Russian human rights NGOs and government.
 - a) Advocacy training for Russian human rights NGOs on the use of position papers, policy analyses, and proper links with political groups.
 - b) National and/or regional advocacy campaigns on specific human rights issues.
 - c) Enhancing collaboration and exchanges with US human rights NGOs.
3. Improved understanding of and demand for the protection of human rights and perception of Russian human rights NGOs.

¹ Under a separate proposed program, human rights education of law students will be a key component.

- a) Civic education and outreach programs.
- b) Training and technical assistance to Russian human rights NGOs in effective use of the media.
- c) Grants for production of investigative reporting related to human rights abuses.

Analyses

USAID's June 2001 human rights assessment forms the primary basis for this proposed program.² This assessment pointed out the need for the human rights movement in Russia to move from simply voicing its concerns to more successfully influencing the creation, implementation and enforcement of laws and public policies related to human rights. While many human rights organizations attempt to wield such influence, few are successful due to constraints in capability and funding. Through more effective: 1) use of the courts, 2) advocacy and dialogue with the executive and legislative branches, and 3) building of public awareness and a constituency on human rights protection, these NGOs should be able to improve the protection of human rights in Russia.

In addition, other key analyses and documents include the State Department's human rights reports (2001 in draft) and the Moscow Helsinki Group's 2000 report.³ These reports show that the human rights situation has improved in some areas and declined in others. An evaluation of USAID assistance to legal clinics is ongoing at this time and will inform that component of this program. There are over a dozen donors working on human rights, of which the Open Society Institute and the Ford and MacArthur Foundations are most significant. Other donor programs focus on strengthening Russian human rights NGOs, supporting legal clinics, and expanding research and monitoring. Other donors have directed programs dealing with human rights in Chechnya, which is an area USAID programs have not addressed directly.

Results of USAID and other donor programs as well as customer feedback indicates that current human rights work in Russia needs to be expanded to achieve real impact. The concept of making human rights NGOs more directly linked with the needs of average Russians by helping these groups take more concrete actions is widely supported and believed to be more likely to enhance the credibility and effectiveness of their advocacy and lead to more sustained, widespread improvements.

Customer/Partner Involvement and Demand

The human rights assessment cited above and ongoing relationships with partners and beneficiaries that work on human rights and legal defense has led to intensive collaboration and identification of shared goals. Our partners, both donors⁴ and implementers⁵, have been consulted. Customers consulted include human rights leaders in Moscow, Perm, Novosibirsk, and Tomsk. The needs of Russian human rights organizations will be addressed through TA, training and continued consultation. A mid-term assessment will

² "Human Rights in Russia -- Next Phase: From Glasnost to Slyshnost," Kathleen Hansen et al, June 2001

³ "Human Rights in Regions of the Russian Federation: Monitoring Report for 1999" and "Human Rights in Regions of the Russian Federation: Monitoring Report for 2000," Moscow Helsinki Group

⁴ Ford, MacArthur, Soros, and Berezovsky Foundations, National Endowment for Democracy, Swiss and British governments and the European Union, among others.

⁵ Moscow Helsinki Group, Sakharov Center, Solidarity Center, ABA/CEELI, Eurasia Foundation

occur in the second year of this program to assure activities are on track and meeting targets and the needs of the intended beneficiaries.

Major Issues or Concerns

Regional foci: Should the program focus on regions with the most serious human rights issues or should the program be piloted in more progressive regions where there is a greater opportunity for dialogue with the government on human rights and issues of religious and ethnic tolerance? Which regions should be considered? Should conflict prevention and management be considered when selecting regions?